

Message Text

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PAGE 01 COTONO 00933 301746Z

73

ACTION AF-06

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 COME-00 EB-07 INR-07

LAB-04 NSAE-00 SIL-01 DODE-00 PM-03 H-02 L-03 NSC-05

PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 OMB-01 SY-05 /082 W

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R 301710Z JUN 75

FM AMEMBASSY COTONOU

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7324

INFO AMEMBASSY ABIDJAN

AMEMBASSY ACCRA

AMEMBASSY CONAKRY

AMEMBASSY LAGOS

AMEMBASSY LOME

AMEMBASSY NIAMEY

AMEMBASSY OUAGADOUGOU

AMEMBASSY PARIS

C O N F I D E N T I A L COTONOU 933

EO 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINS, PGOV, DM

SUBJ: STATUS REPORT ON GENERAL STRIKE AGAINST PRES KEREKOU (6)

REF COTONOU 923 AND PREVIOUS

BEGIN SUMMARY: USING STRONG-ARM METHODS, GOVT HAS SUBSTANTIALLY REDUCED EFFECTIVENESS OF GENERAL STRIKE. ARRESTS AND POLICE BEATINGS CONTINUE. THERE WERE SERIOUS TROUBLES IN OUIDAH OVER WEEKEND. POPULAR ATTITUDE IS SULLEN AND TENSION REMAINS HIGH. END SUMMARY

1. USING STRONG-ARM METHODS, GOVT HAS SUBSTANTIALLY REDUCED THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE GENERAL STRIKE THROUGH A) SECURITY RING AROUND COTONOU WHICH PREVENTED EGRESS FROM THE CAPITAL THROUGHOUT WEEKEND, AND B) SECURITY ACTIONS INSIDE COTONOU. SOLDIERS ARE STATIONED IN OFFICE AND PRIVATE FIRMS, AND TOWN IS BLANKETED WITH MOTORCYCLE PATROLS. PRELIMINARY IN-CONFIDENTIAL

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PAGE 02 COTONO 00933 301746Z

DICATIONS ARE THAT PRIMARY SCHOOLS ARE IN SESSION AND THAT,

IN GENERAL, NOT TOO MANY EMPLOYEES ARE ABSENT FROM WORK. REPORTEDLY ONE STIMULUS FOR SCHOOL TEACHERS TO GET BACK ON JOB HAS BEEN SEIZURE OF SOME WIVES AS HOSTAGES (A TATIC USED IN MARCH, WHEN HUSBANDS WERE JAILED TO DISCOURAGE DEMONSTRATIONS BY THEIR WIVES). THERER MUST BE SOME ABSENTEEISM BECAUSE OFFICIAL RADIO IS STILL EXHORTING WORKERS TO RETURN TO JOBS AND PROMISING THAT REPRISALS WILL BE TAKEN ONLY AGAINST THOSE WHO SIGNED STRIKE PETITIONS. RADIO CONTINUED TO ASCRIBE CURRENT TROUBLES TO "PAID AGENTS OF INTERNATIONAL IMPERIALISM."

2. REPORTS OF ARRESTS AND POLICE BEATINGS CONTINUE TO COME IN. THE DIRECTOR OF CUSTOMS (DAMIEN MOHAMED) IS IN A COMA IN A LOCAL HOSPITAL FOLLOWING BEATINGS DURING WEEKEND. AN UNIDENTIFIED TRADE UNION LEADER IS RUMORED TO HAVE BEEN BEATEN TO DEATH JUNE 28.

3. APPARENTLY THERE WERE SERIOUS TROUBLES IN OUIDAH (25 MILS WEST OF COTONOU) OVER WEEKEND. TRAVELERS WHO TRIED TO SKIRT THE TOWN ENROUTE TO THE WEST EARLY ON JUNE 28 REPORT IT WAS CORDONED OFF. REPORTEDLY RIOTERS TORE UP RAILWAY TRACKS AND SET FIRE TO ROLLING EQUIPMENT. ONE REPORT ATTRIBUTES SOME OF TROUBLES TO PARATROOPS AT LOCAL GARRISON WHO ARE ANGRY OVER MURDER OF THEIR COMMANDER (AIKPE).

4. DESPITE RETURN TO WORK OF MANY STRIKERS, THE POPULAR ATTITUDE IS SULLEN AND TENTION REMAINS HIGH. WE EXPECT FURTHER REPRESSIVE ACTIONS BY GOVT AND UNABATED DISCONTENT.
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